

WASHINGTON - This one wasn't even close.

Lackland Air Force Base in Texas was rated far ahead of five other finalists to house the Air Force's new cyber warfare unit, according to information provided Monday to congressional staffers.

Omaha-area leaders had hoped to bring the cyber unit to Offutt Air Force Base, but the Air Force announced last week that it's sending the unit to Lackland.

Offutt finished third in the scoring, with 72.9 points out of a possible 100. Lackland was the clear winner with 96.5 points, and Peterson Air Force Base finished second with 74.5 points.

That situation was very different from last month's decision regarding the Air Force's new Global Strike Command. Offutt finished with the top score in that competition, but the Air Force instead went with Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana.

The most important category in the cyber unit scoring system was mission synergy, worth 35 points.

Offutt got 10 out of 35. The briefing materials provided to congressional staffers noted that Offutt has no numbered Air Force units with operational cyber missions, while Lackland has two of three cyber operational wings. Lackland got a 35 on mission synergy.

Offutt got perfect scores in communications, facilities, support capacity and access but took a hit in the security category. The base got 7.9 out of 10. The briefing materials cited "multiple (anti-terrorism) concerns."

Capt. Joseph Campbell, an Offutt spokesman, said the security concerns appeared to be related to the building that would have housed the cyber unit, had Offutt been chosen, and not overall base security.

Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb., said that Offutt's security score is a concern and that he is seeking more information.

"We will get a specific briefing on perimeter and base security from the Air Force, and I will be talking to our new commander of the base," Terry said.

Terry has requested earmarked funds this year to upgrade the security gates at Offutt. He said Monday that he didn't want to speculate on the reason for the security score.



